

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANJUL 00754 211251Z

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R 211055Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANJUL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANJUL 0754

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AF DISTRIBUTION ONLY

FOR BISHOP AF/W FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OGEN ASIG GA

SUBJ: POST COMMENTS ON INSPECTION REPORT

REF: BISHOP-WYGANT LETTER DATED JULY 6.

1. INSPECTORS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BANJUL SUGGEST VARIOUS INITIATIVES TO BE TAKEN BY AF/W. IN OUR OPINION, THREE MOST IMPORTANT AREAS REQUIRING YOUR SUPPORT ARE CONTINUATION ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, STRENGTHENING OF INFORMATION PROGRAM, AND ASSURANCE CONTINUED HIGH CALIBER PC DIRECTION. SPECIFIC COMMENTS FOLLOW:

A. AID APPARENTLY NOW SHARES EMBASSY'S VIEW THAT US ASSISTANCE TO THE GAMBIA SHOULD CONTINUE ON LONGER TERM BASIS, USING MORE TRADITIONAL AID PROGRAMMING CRITERIA. IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR AF/W TO CONTINUE REGULAR DIALOGUE WITH AID/W TO ENSURE TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION CONCRETE PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS, AND MONITOR PROGRESS ON-GOING PROJECTS.

B. EMBASSY'S MOST CRITICAL CURRENT NEED IS FOR MORE MEANINGFUL USIA ASSISTANCE TO OUR PRESENTLY MINIMAL INFORMATION AND CULTURAL PROGRAM. THE GAMBIA IS HIGHLY RECEPTIVE TO
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ANY US PRODUCED MATERIALS, AND IS SENDING LARGE NUMBERS OF

ITS YOUNG PEOPLE TO US EVERY YEAR FOR FURTHER EDUCATION. INSPECTION REPORT SOMEWHAT OVERSTATES COMPETITION WITH COMMUNISTS IN THIS FIELD, NONETHELESS ITS CONCLUSIONS ARE VALID. MOREOVER, A BETTER INFORMATION PROGRAM HERE WOULD STAND ON ITS OWN MERITS.

C. WE HAVE FIRM INDICATIONS THAT PC PLANS TO CHANGE OUR DIRECTOR THIS FALL, AFTER ONLY ONE YEAR IN THE GAMBIA. PC SHOULD BE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO RECOGNIZE NEED FOR CONTINUITY IN COUNTRY PROGRAM LEADERSHIP. CURRENT DIRECTOR HAS DONE OUTSTANDING JOB IMPROVING PC PROGRAMMING AND FORWARD PLANNING, WHILE SECURING GREATLY INCREASED LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR PC EFFORT. IF HE MUST BE REPLACED, SUCCESSOR SHOULD BE OF EQUALLY HIGH CALIBER, WITH IN-DEPTH PC EXPERIENCE, OTHERWISE PROGRAM WILL SUFFER RENEWED DOLDRUMS REMINISCENT 1974 - EARLY 1975 PERIOD. SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT NUMBERS PCVS IN THE GAMBIA WILL DOUBLE FROM CURRENT 27 TO APPROXIMATELY 50 BY FALL OF THIS YEAR.

2. WHILE MOST OF OVERALL INSPECTION REPORT BEARS RATHER LIGHTLY ON OPERATIONS AND PROBLEMS OF THIS MINE-EMBASSY WE WOULD OFFER FOLLOWING GENERAL COMMENTS:

A. NEED TO SPLIT AF/W THREE WAYS APPEARS QUESTIONABLE FROM THIS VANTAGE. PROPOSED SET-UP WOULD NOT CREATE NEW POSITIONS, BUT WOULD MERELY REPLACE MIDDLE-GRADE OFFICERS WITH MORE SENIOR OFFICERS. WE WONDER IF PRIOR AFRICAN EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE IN DEPTH OF AFRICA, AND GENERAL AFRICAN EXPERTISE MIGHT NOT BE OF EQUAL IF NOT GREATER IMPORTANCE IN SELECTING FUTURE OFFICERS FOR AF/W. WEST AFRICA IS, AFTER-ALL, A REGIONAL WHOLE WITH INCREASINGLY INTERLOCKING POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS. SPLIT-UP OF AF/W COULD PLACE SUBSTANTIAL ADDED COORDINATION BURDEN ON SENIOR AF OFFICIALS. RECOMMENDATION THAT NEWLY CREATED SAHEL DIRECTORATE BE MERGED WITH PART OF AFR ALSO COULD RAISE SERIOUS COORDINATION PROBLEMS. FURTHERMORE, SEVERENCE ONE PORTION AFR FROM PARENT BODY COULD RISK ITS BEING ISOLATED FROM MAIN STREAM AID/AFR ACTIVITIES ESPECIALLY IN FORMULATION OVER-ALL POLICY AND STRATEGY.

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B. WE WOULD HEARTILY SUPPORT INSPECTORS' RECOMMENDATION THAT INEXPERIENCED PERSONNEL NOT BE ASSIGNED TO SMALL POSTS PR WEST AFRICA. WHILE SOME OFFICERS AND STAFF CAN RISE TO OCCASION AND TURN IN CRIDITABLE PERFORMANCE DESPITE INADEQUATE BACKGROUND, OTHER WITH GOOD BASIC QUALIFICATIONS ARE UNABLE TO COPE. CAREER PROSPECTS FOR THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE OFTEN JEOPARDIZED, BUT THROUGH NO FAULT OF EMPLOYEE. OF COURSE, EFFECT THESE ASSIGNMENTS ON POST ALSO HAS SERIOUS

CONSEQUENCES FOR MISSION OPERATIONS.

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